

support of the Christian is to do the will of Jesus. The duty will many a time be hard, the food such as men do not love; but so was it with Christ, yet even in the last scenes of Gethsemane He cries out under the figure which such a use has sanctified: "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" And when at last the work of Christ was over, "Now," says He, "come I to thee;" and the end of the Christian's obedience is to be the same. It is that he may be assured of this, that the Lord's Supper was ordained, and the outward symbols named by Christ, His body and His blood. For, by faithful obedience to the Lord's last command, men are to realise in their inward life two mysteries, first, that His resurrection-body is ascended into heaven, and that becoming one with Him they shall also have a spiritual body and become children of the resurrection; and beside this, that His blood outpoured has been accepted as a satisfaction for our sins, and that through Him the guilt-stains have been removed which gave to death its sting and made resurrection terrible. In this way the faithful are one with Christ as He is one with God.

III. Our Lord also employs the language of the banquet and of feasting when He desires to make his hearers comprehend somewhat of the nature of the kingdom of heaven, when that phrase is used of the state of the blessed after death. Thus we read, "Many shall come from the east and from the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven." The verb in the original which is here translated by "sit down," is one specially confined to the descriptions of feasts. It signifies "to recline at length," in the fashion of Orientals when they are at a feast and conveys a notion of ease and repose which is wanting in our translation. The Synoptists use this verb of the arrangement of the multitudes along the green

grass, when our Lord wrought His miracle of the feeding of the five thousand, and the chief idea conveyed by it is one of ease and comfort. The same idea of a feast runs through the description of the kingdom of heaven, in the parable of the ten virgins. The marriage, to which those who were ready went in, is a marriage banquet, and the admitted guests are those who recline beside Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, while those in misery stand at the closed door. As we should expect, the more material figures of eating and drinking are less prominently put forward in these descriptions of the spiritual state, but even those expressions are sometimes found in the sayings of the Lord. For example, when, in the institution of the Lord's Supper, He would teach His disciples that the eucharistic blessings are not for time only, He says (Matt. xxvi. 29), after the giving of the cup: "I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." It seems impossible to understand the last words of this sentence as anything except a comforting declaration that in the future world there is to be a more perfect feast, of which the earthly supper was, in some far-off sense, a representation. And henceforth He would have the faithful bear this in mind. The passover feast, or rather, the breaking of bread, which has taken its place, is never to be observed without the reflection that there is prepared in the kingdom of God some condition of bliss which is most fitly pictured by an earthly feast of love. No trace of sensuous enjoyment enters into the picture, though things of sense are used for its expression. The simplicity of broken bread banishes every such thought, and the faithful observers of the eucharistic feast on earth feel only that there are greater gifts in store when they shall be united in communion with the Lord at the great marriage supper of the Lamb. But perhaps we may gather most completely the sense which Christ desires to convey, by all these expressions. That narrative is full of the ideas connected with a feast. It is not without purpose that, in the outset, the sumptuous fare of Dives is dwelt